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KNUCKLES: THE RETURN
PART 1 OF 4
#9
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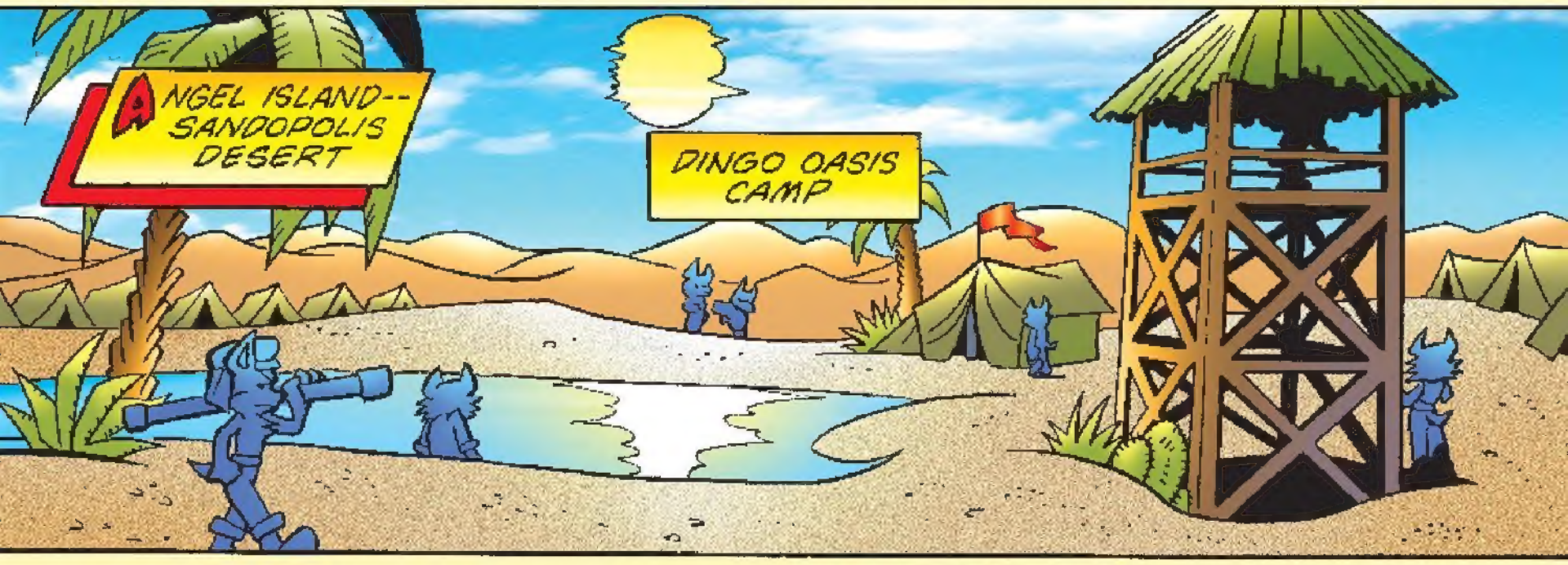
SONIC UNIVERSE™
Tracy Yardley!
MUNZEKER

Welcome to the planet Mobius – a world unique and beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where Knuckles the Echidna, guardian of Angel Island, defends his friends and homeland from the forces of evil!



ECHOES of the PAST

PART ONE

Writer: IAN FLYNN • Pencils: TRACY YARDLEY! • Inks: JIM AMASH
Colors: JASON JENSEN • Letters: TERESA DAVIDSON
Assistant Editor: PAUL KAMINSKI • Editor/Managing Editor: MIKE PELLERITO
Editor-in-Chief: VICTOR GORELICK
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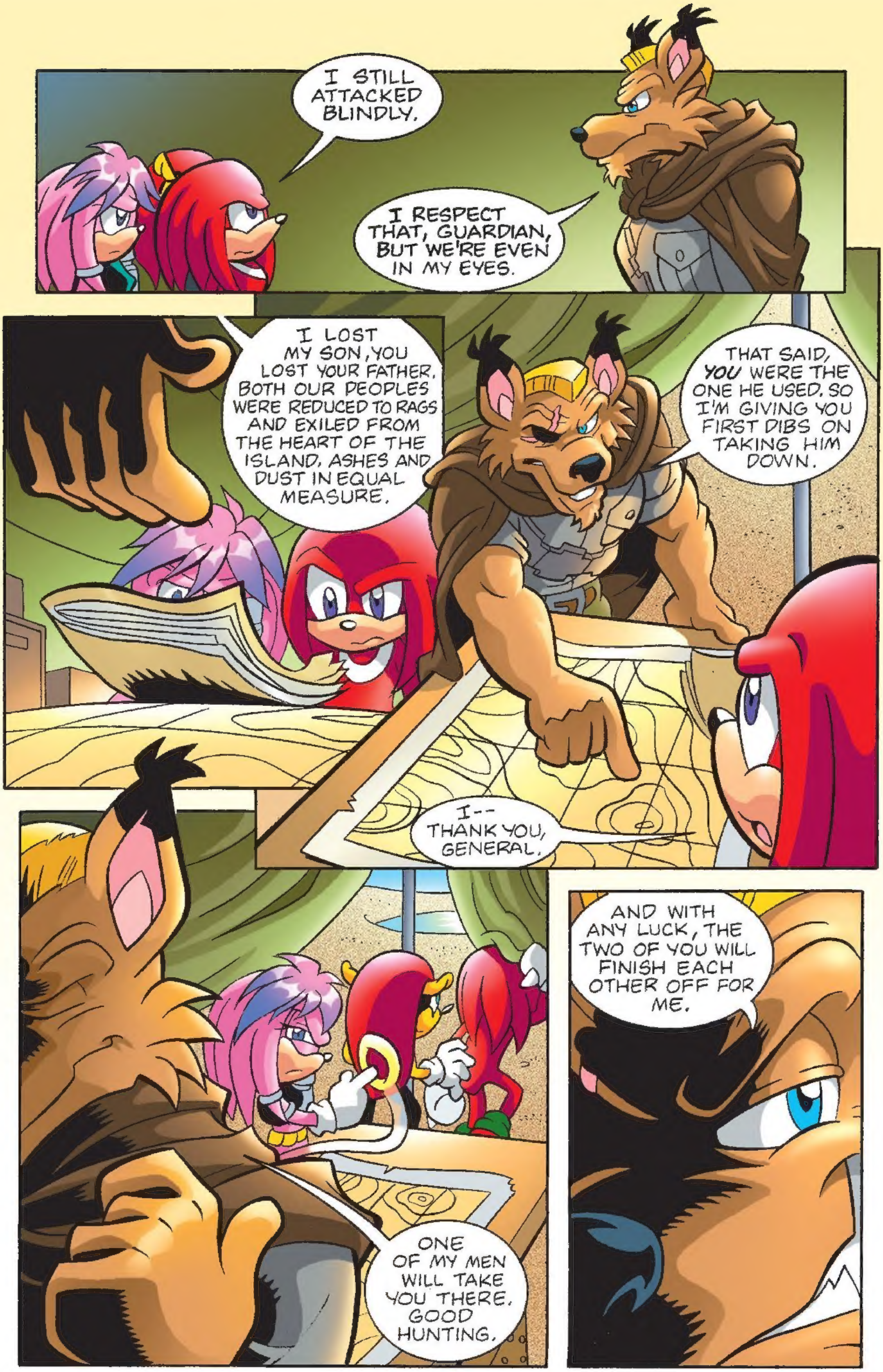
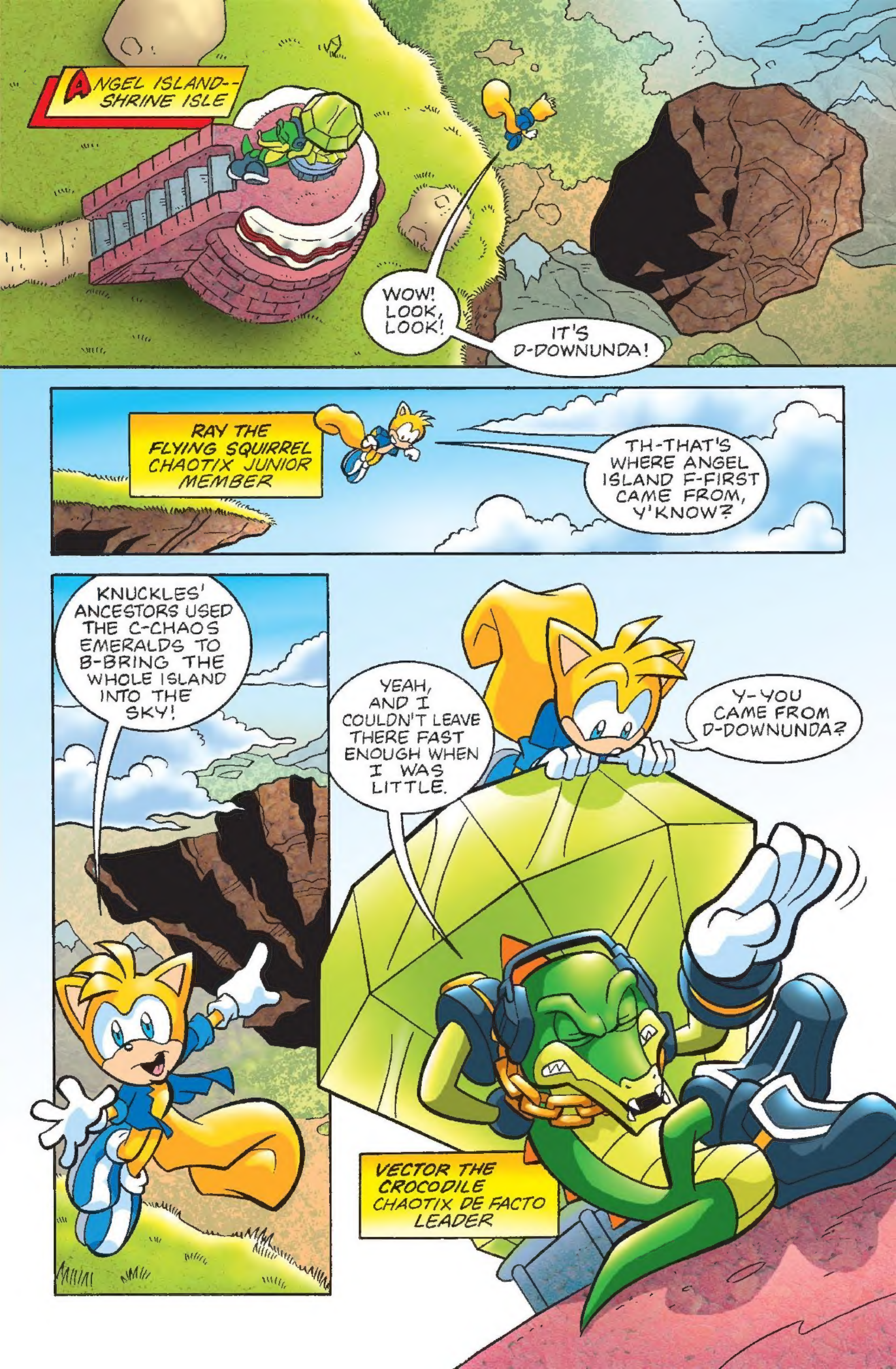
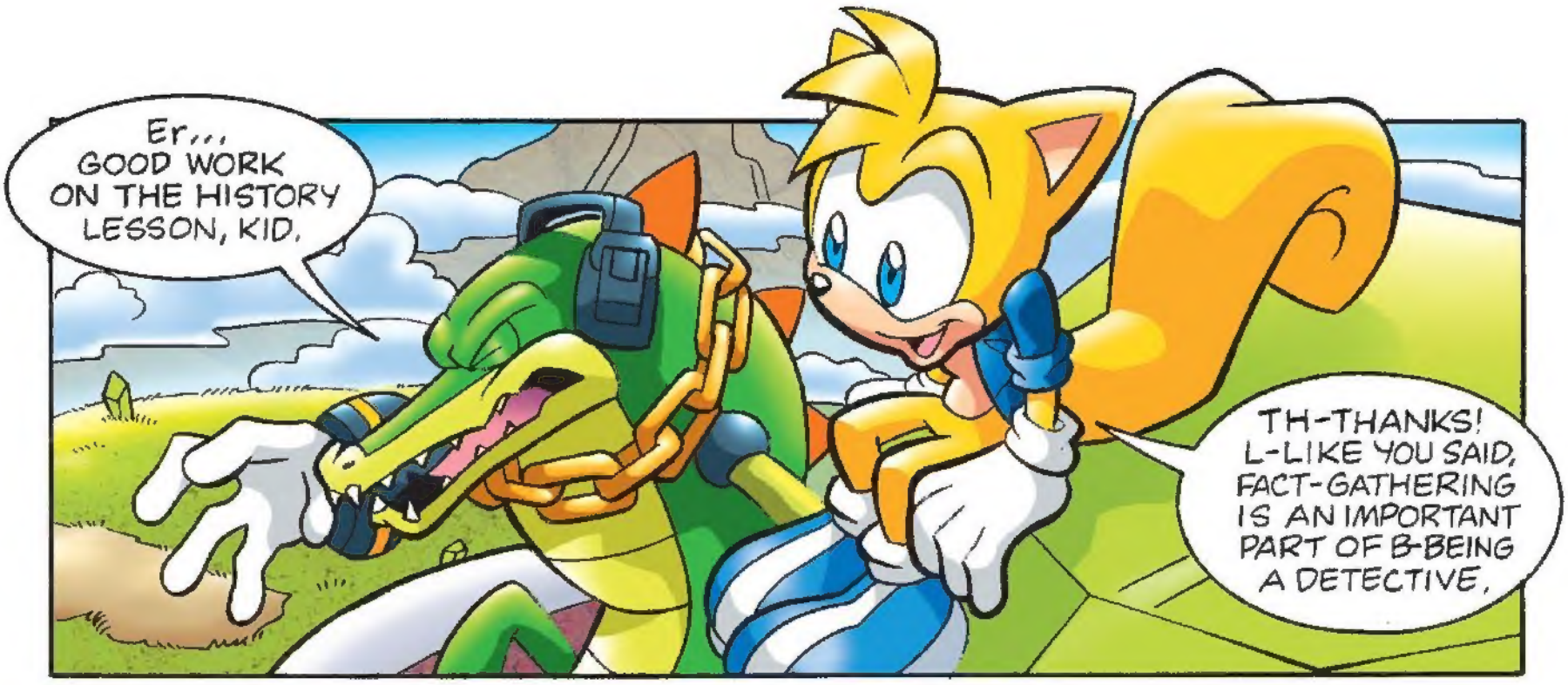
ALWAYS BLUNT, THAT ONE!
THE FILES, PLEASE.
RIGHT-O, BOSS!
I CALLED YOU HERE BECAUSE YOU LIED TO ME.
LIED?
ONE OF MY SCOUT TEAMS FOUND THE LAB OF DR. FINITEVUS. THIS IS A HARD COPY OF HIS NOTES ON "PROJECT ENERJAK: REBORN". IT DETAILS EVERYTHING, FROM START TO FINISH.
CATWEAZLE LOUD-MOUTH
GEN. HELMUT VON STRYKER LEADER OF THE DINGOES
IT'S BEEN ENLIGHTENING, AND IT PROVES THAT EVERYTHING WASN'T YOUR FAULT.*
*"EVERYTHING" BEING THE EPIC FROM STH #180-184

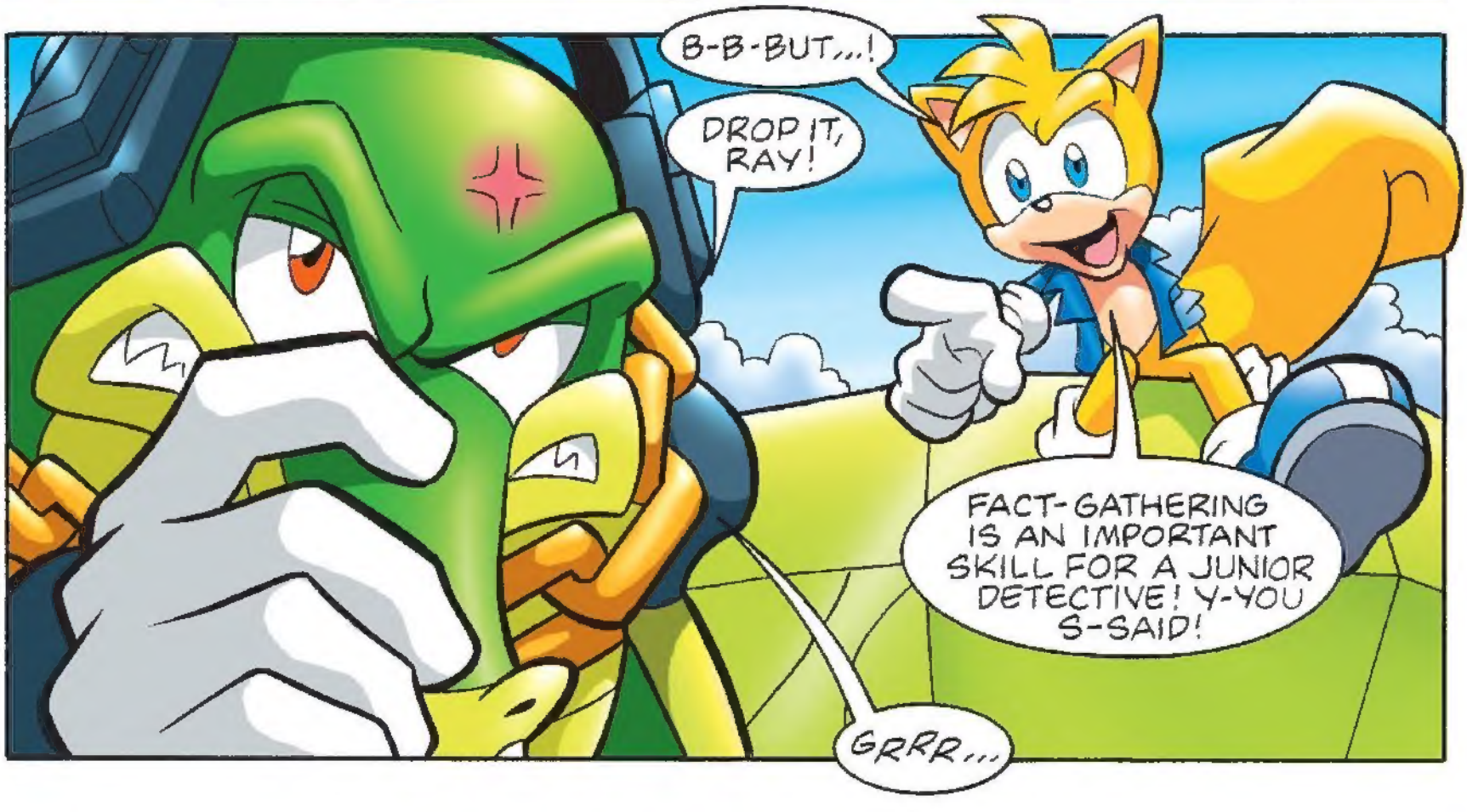

I STILL ATTACKED BLINDLY.
I RESPECT THAT, GUARDIAN, BUT WE'RE EVEN IN MY EYES.
I LOST MY SON, YOU LOST YOUR FATHER. BOTH OUR PEOPLES WERE REDUCED TO RAGS AND EXILED FROM THE HEART OF THE ISLAND, ASHES AND DUST IN EQUAL MEASURE.
THAT SAID, YOU WERE THE ONE HE USED. SO I'M GIVING YOU FIRST DIBS ON TAKING HIM DOWN.
I-- THANK YOU, GENERAL.
ONE OF MY MEN WILL TAKE YOU THERE. GOOD HUNTING.
AND WITH ANY LUCK, THE TWO OF YOU WILL FINISH EACH OTHER OFF FOR ME.


ANGEL ISLAND--SHRINE ISLE
WOW! LOOK, LOOK!
IT'S D-DOWNUNDA!
RAY THE FLYING SQUIRREL CHAOTIX JUNIOR MEMBER
TH-THAT'S WHERE ANGEL ISLAND F-FIRST CAME FROM, Y'KNOW?
KNUCKLES' ANCESTORS USED THE C-CHAOS EMERALDS TO B-BRING THE WHOLE ISLAND INTO THE SKY!
YEAH, AND I COULDN'T LEAVE THERE FAST ENOUGH WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
Y-YOU CAME FROM D-DOWNUNDA?
VECTOR THE CROCODILE CHAOTIX DE FACTO LEADER


Er... GOOD WORK ON THE HISTORY LESSON, KID.
TH-THANKS! L-LIKE YOU SAID, FACT-GATHERING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF B-BEING A DETECTIVE.

RIGHT YOU ARE! YOU'RE A PROMISING JUNIOR CHAOTIC.
TH-THANKS! S-SO WHAT'S THIS ABOUT YOU AND D-DOWNUNDA?

DON'T PUSH IT, KID.


B-B-BUT...!
DROP IT, RAY!
FACT-GATHERING IS AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A JUNIOR DETECTIVE! Y-YOU S-SAID!
GRRR...

THERE'S NOT MUCH TO TELL. I WAS HATCHED THERE, BUT I NEVER KNEW MY FOLKS.

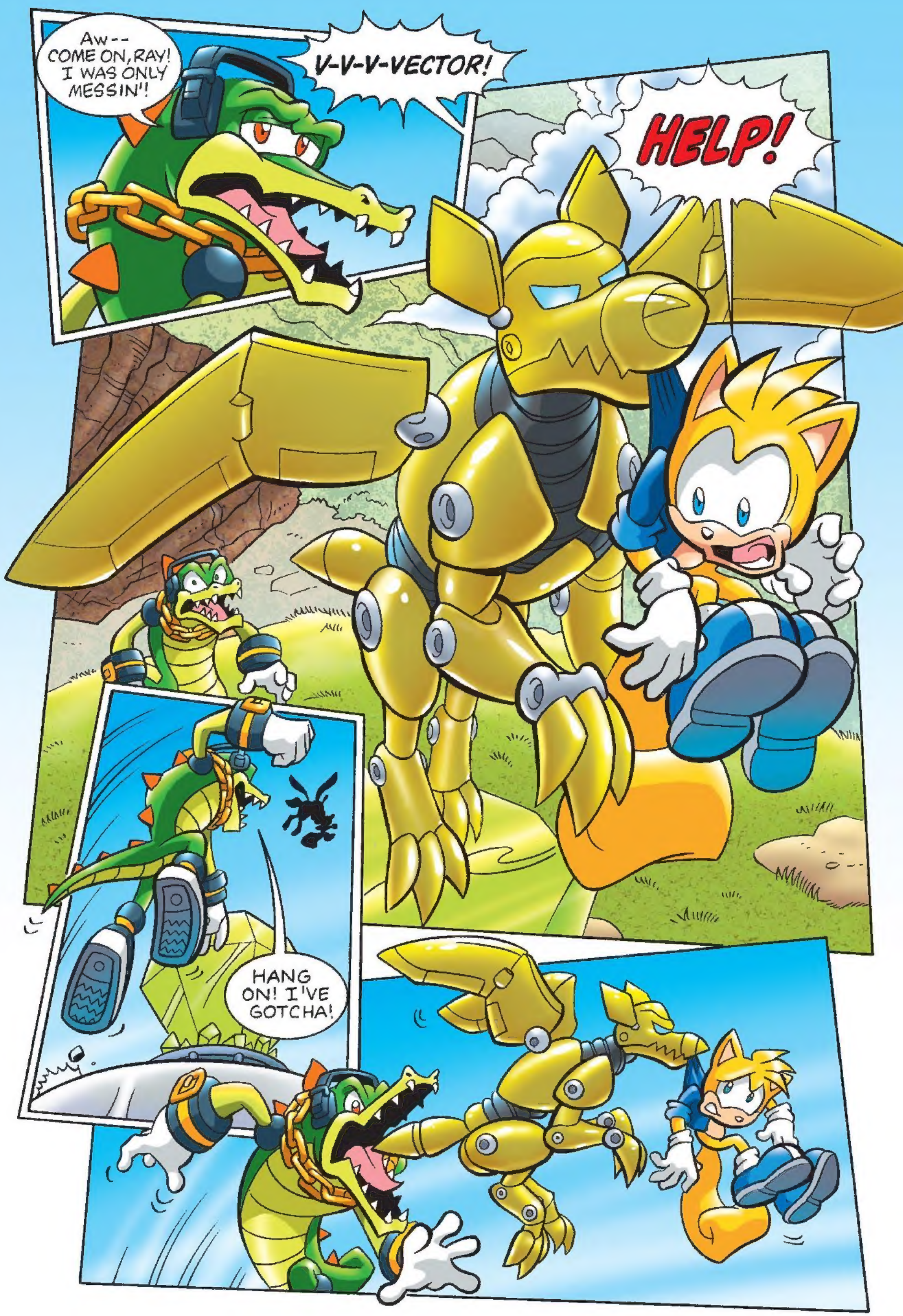
I HOOKED UP WITH A CREW OF ORPHANS, RAN AROUND THE OUTBACK, HAD SOME LAUGHS...

AND... THEN THINGS WENT SOUTH. I BUILT A GYROCOPTER* AND GOT OUT OF THERE. THAT'S IT.

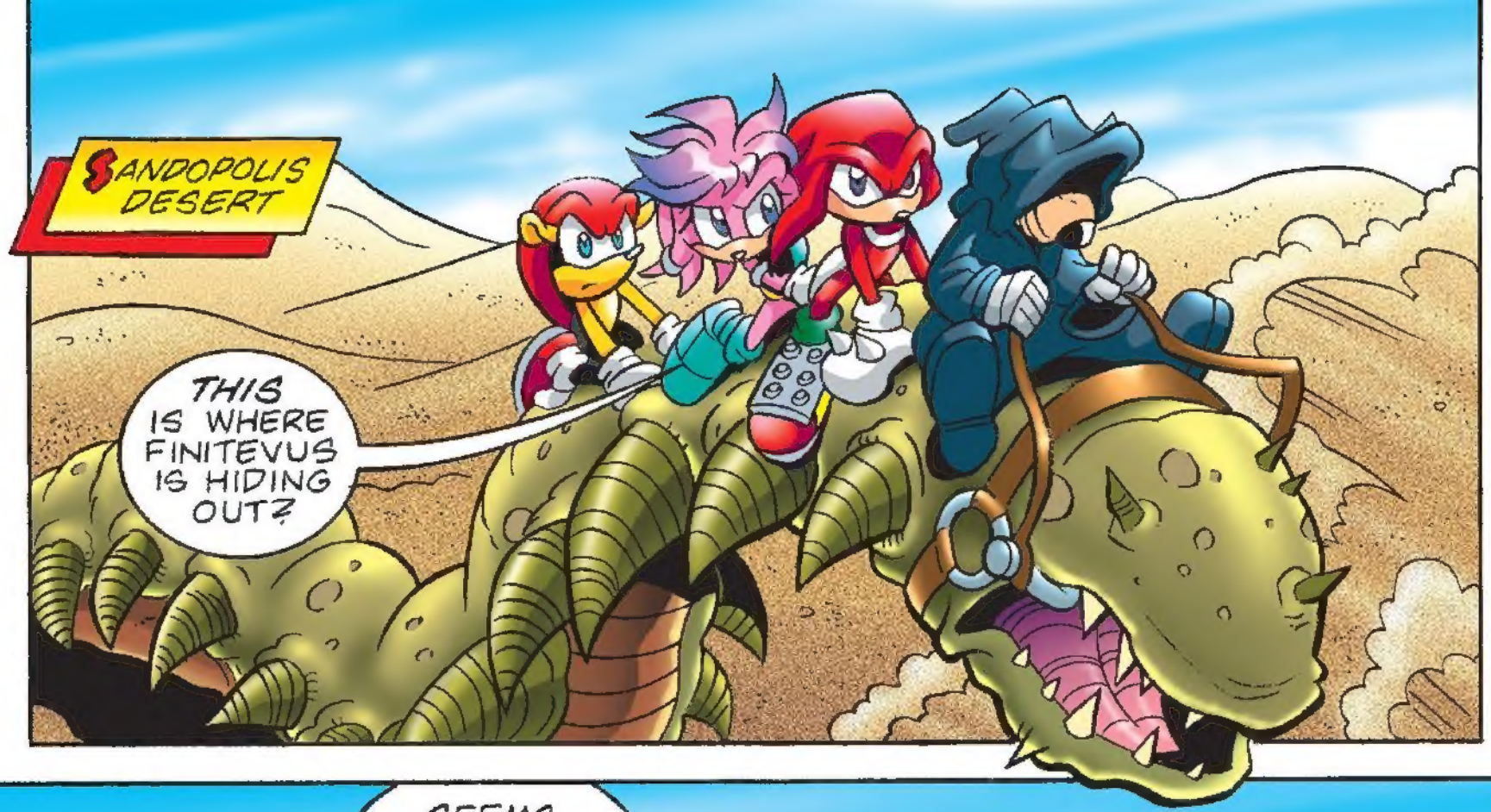
*WE SAW IT IN STH #120

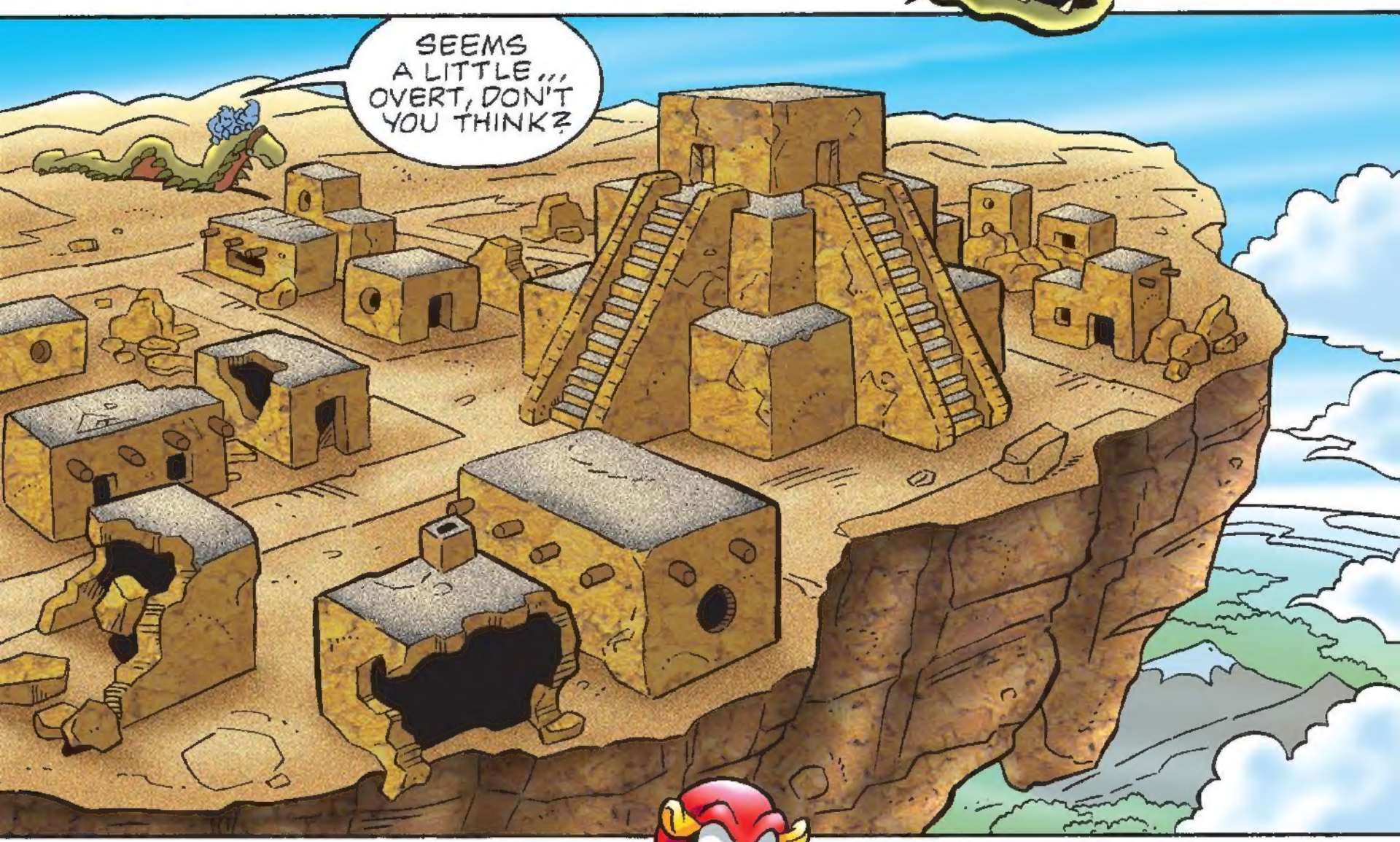
AND IF YOU WANT ANYTHING MORE, YOU CAN BUZZ OFF!

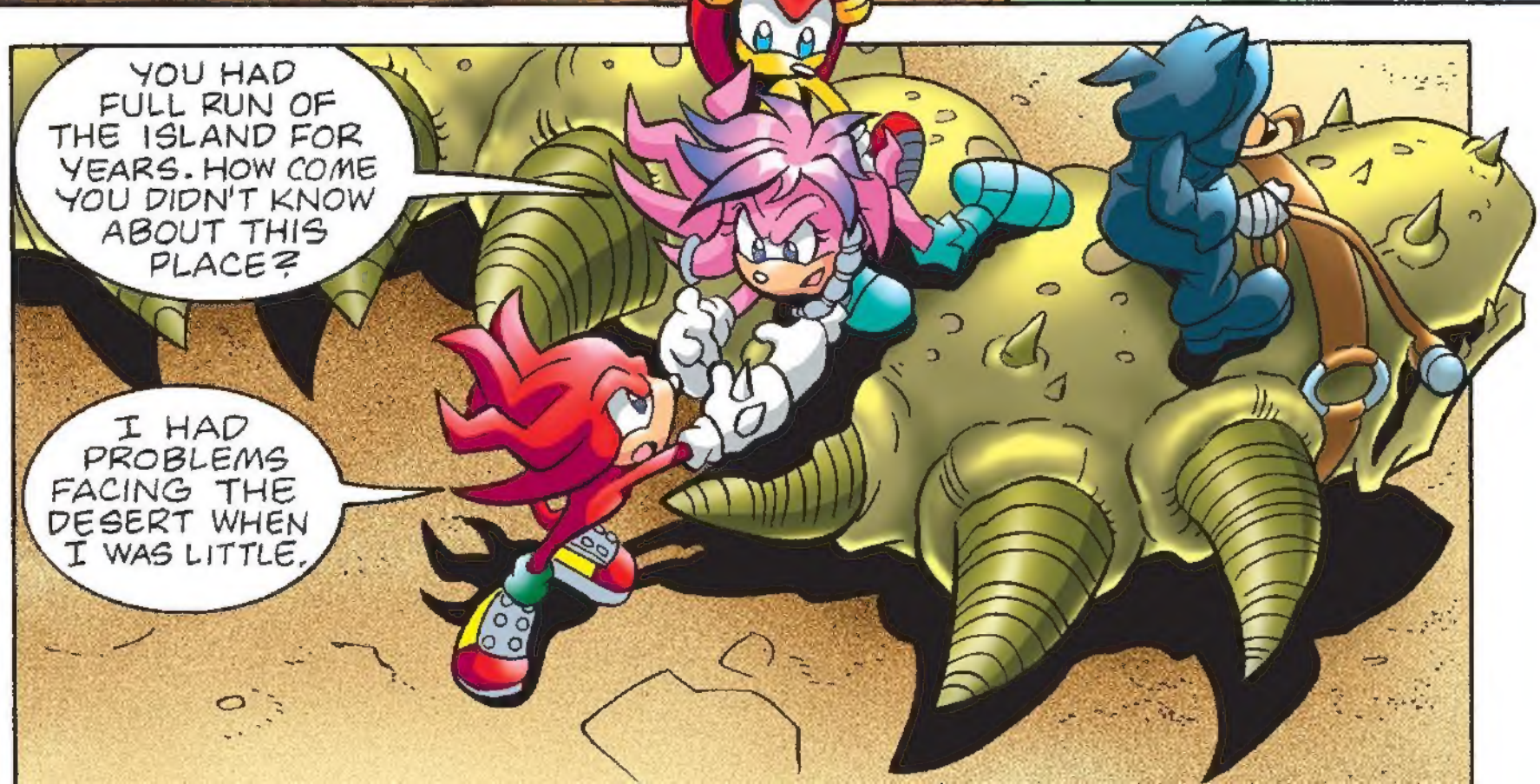
...RAY?

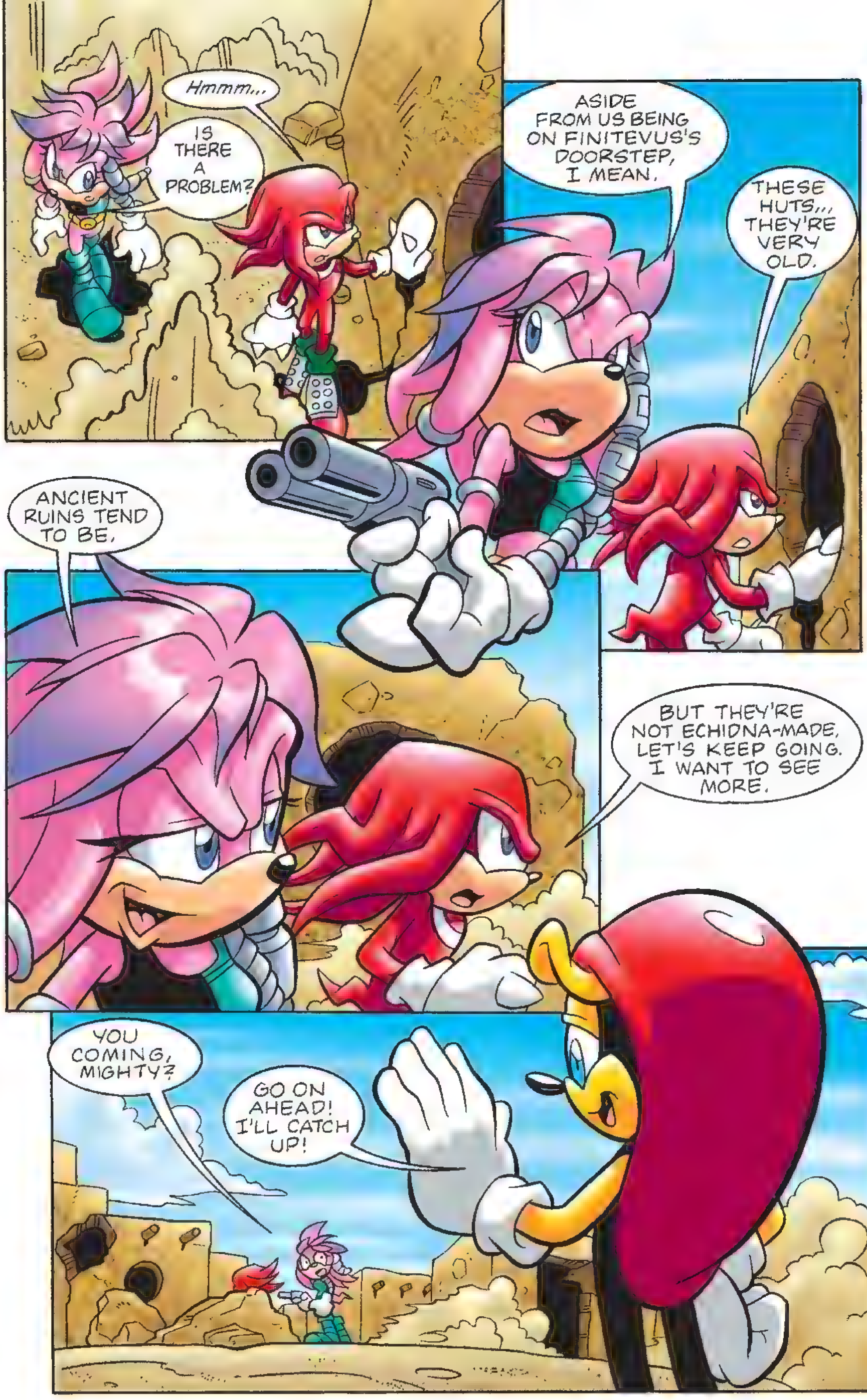

AW-- COME ON, RAY! I WAS ONLY MESSIN'!
V-V-V-VECTOR!
HELP!
HANG ON! I'VE GOTCHA!

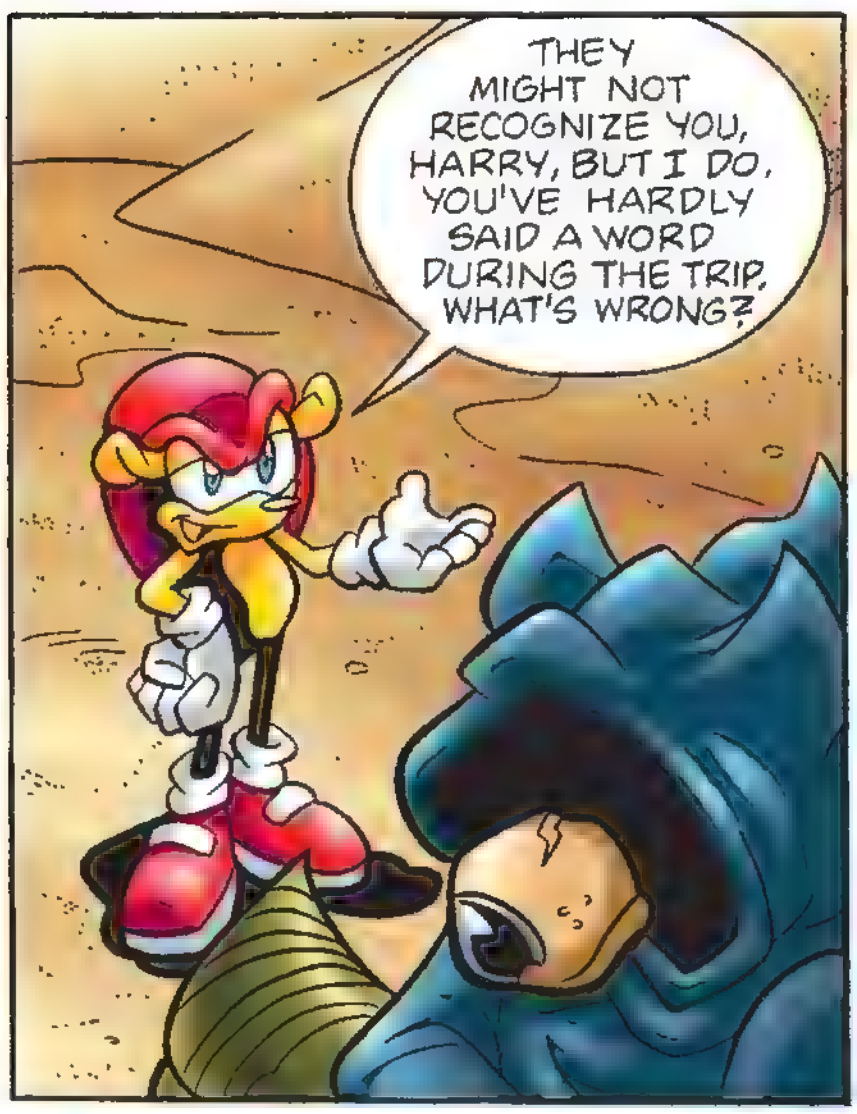
SMASH
TH-TH-THANKS! W-W-WHAT WAS THAT?
I DUNNO...
...BUT THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH MORE.


SANDOPOLIS DESERT
THIS IS WHERE FINITEVUS IS HIDING OUT?

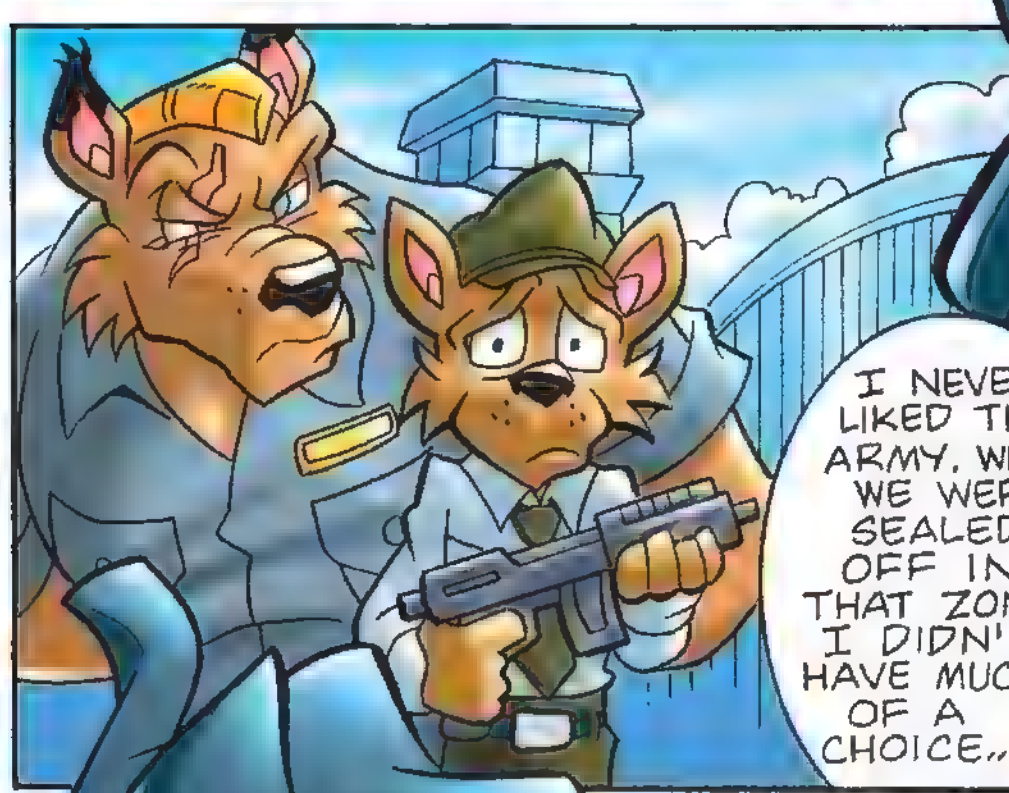

SEEMS A LITTLE... OVERT, DON'T YOU THINK?


YOU HAD FULL RUN OF THE ISLAND FOR YEARS. HOW COME YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE?
I HAD PROBLEMS FACING THE DESERT WHEN I WAS LITTLE.


Hmmm...
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
ASIDE FROM US BEING ON FINITEVUS'S DOORSTEP, I MEAN.
THESE HUTS... THEY'RE VERY OLD.
ANCIENT RUINS TEND TO BE.
BUT THEY'RE NOT ECHIDNA-MADE. LET'S KEEP GOING. I WANT TO SEE MORE.
YOU COMING, MIGHTY?
GO ON AHEAD! I'LL CATCH UP!


THEY MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE YOU, HARRY, BUT I DO. YOU'VE HARDLY SAID A WORD DURING THE TRIP. WHAT'S WRONG?

"WHAT'S WRONG" HE ASKS...


I NEVER LIKED THE ARMY. WHEN WE WERE SEALED OFF IN THAT ZONE, I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE...

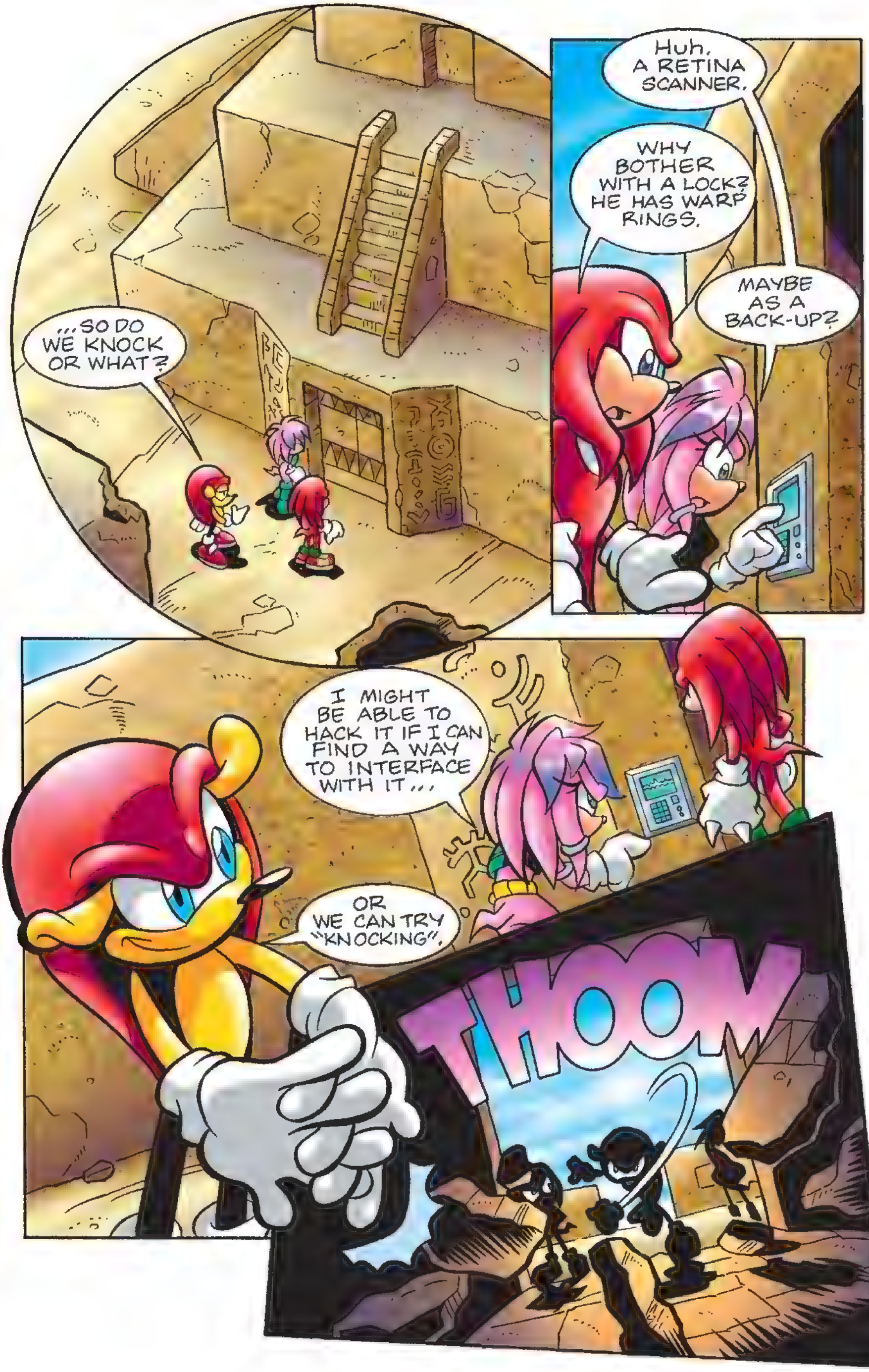
TAXI
I LOVED MY GIG AS A CABBIE. I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING EXCITING UNTIL I RAN INTO YOUR CREW...
51782

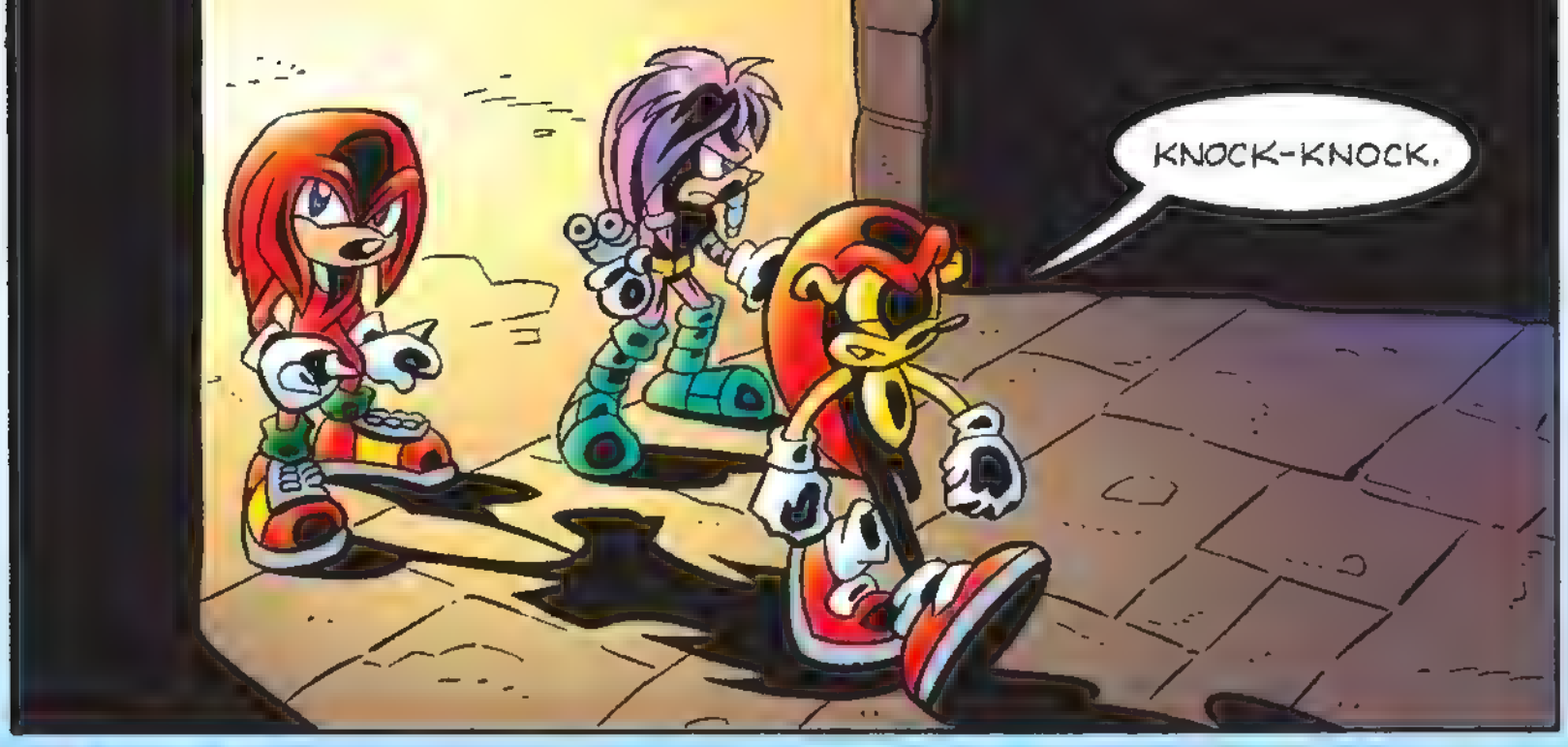
"THEN THE GENERAL'S SON, KAGE, TOOK OVER. I WAS FORCED BACK INTO THE ARMY, AND IF I'D BEEN SMART, I WOULD'VE PLAYED BY HIS RULES...
"INSTEAD, I HELPED THE GUARDIAN'S OLD MAN. I PLAYED SPY UP UNTIL YOU RESCUED HIM."
BUT YOU LEFT ME BEHIND, AND KAGE WASN'T HAPPY WITH ME.
BUT THEN ENERJAK TOSSED US OUT HERE. THE GENERAL TAKES CARE OF US NOW, CALLS ME A HERO TO HIS CAUSE, SO I'M STICKING WITH HIM.

HARRY... I'M... I'M SO SORRY. EVERYTHING MOVED SO FAST THAT DAY, WE...
SAVE IT, KID. I AIN'T ANGRY. I'M JUST TIRED OF YOUR MESSES.
HUP!
YOU'VE GOT A WARP RING WITH YOU, RIGHT?
Y-YEAH...
THEN MY JOB IS DONE.

THIS ISN'T ADDING UP.
KNUX, CAN WE WORRY ABOUT THE ARCHEOLOGY LATER?
BUT I KNOW THE HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE NOW. THESE HUTS ARE NOT BUILT IN OUR STYLE.
THERE WERE OTHER MOBIANS SETTLED ON DOWNUNDA BACK THEN, YOU KNOW.
A FEW SCATTERED TRIBES, SURE. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THIS ADVANCED.
I KNOW SOME REALLY OLD ALBION ARCHITECTURE LOOKED LIKE THAT PYRAMID, BUT...

OKAY THEN, IT'S AN OLD ALBION SETTLEMENT. HAPPY NOW?
NO, THAT DOESN'T WORK EITHER.
OH FOR THE LOVE OF... WHY?!
THERE WAS ONLY ONE ALBION COLONY, AND THAT TURNED INTO ECHIDNAOPOLIS!
THESE HUTS ARE TOO OLD, AND THEY AREN'T ECHIDNA-MADE! THE PYRAMID ONLY MAKES THINGS MORE CONFUSING!
THE ALBION CIVILIZATION WAS ANCIENT. IT'S POSSIBLE THERE'RE OTHER COLONIES OR PARTS OF HISTORY YOU JUST DON'T KNOW!
B-BUT...! I SPENT SO LONG LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, AND ALL I LEARNED FROM THE BROTHERHOOD...
HEY GUYS? CAN WE GET BACK TO THE PSYCHO IN THE PYRAMID?
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU.


...SO DO WE KNOCK OR WHAT?
Huh. A RETINA SCANNER.
WHY BOTHER WITH A LOCK? HE HAS WARP RINGS.
MAYBE AS A BACK-UP?
I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HACK IT IF I CAN FIND A WAY TO INTERFACE WITH IT...
OR WE CAN TRY "KNOCKING".
THOOM



THIS IS AN OLD ALBION STRONGHOLD!

AN ORIGINAL INSTALLATION, EVEN!

ARE YOU SURE?

POSITIVE.

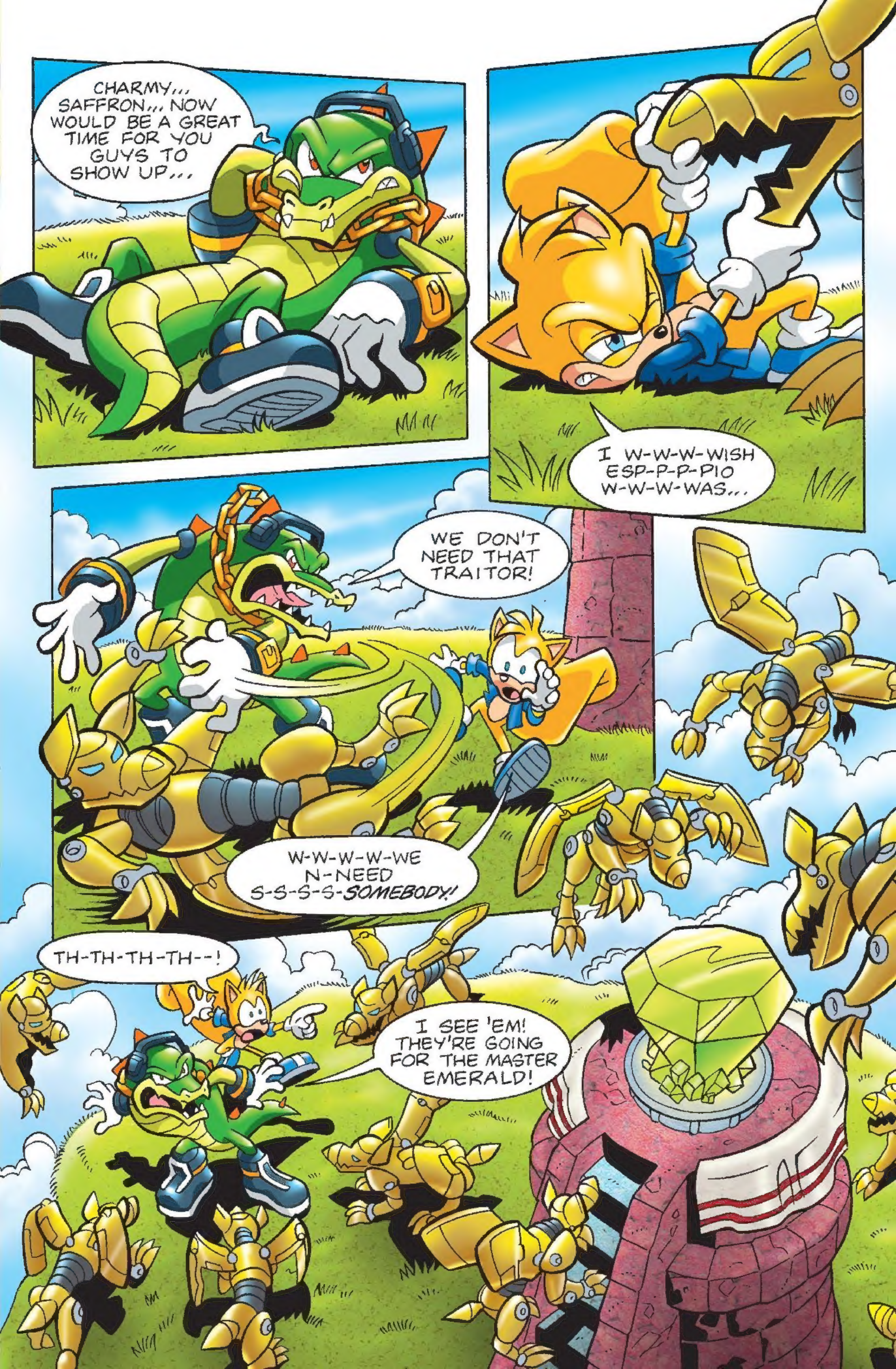
I'VE SEEN OTHER PYRAMIDS LIKE THIS,* BUT I ALWAYS ASSUMED THEY WERE FROM THE ECHIDNAOPOLIS COLONY.

WHY WOULD THEY HAVE A RESEARCH-FORTRESS BUILT IN THE MIDDLE OF A PRIMITIVE DOWNUNDA SETTLEMENT?

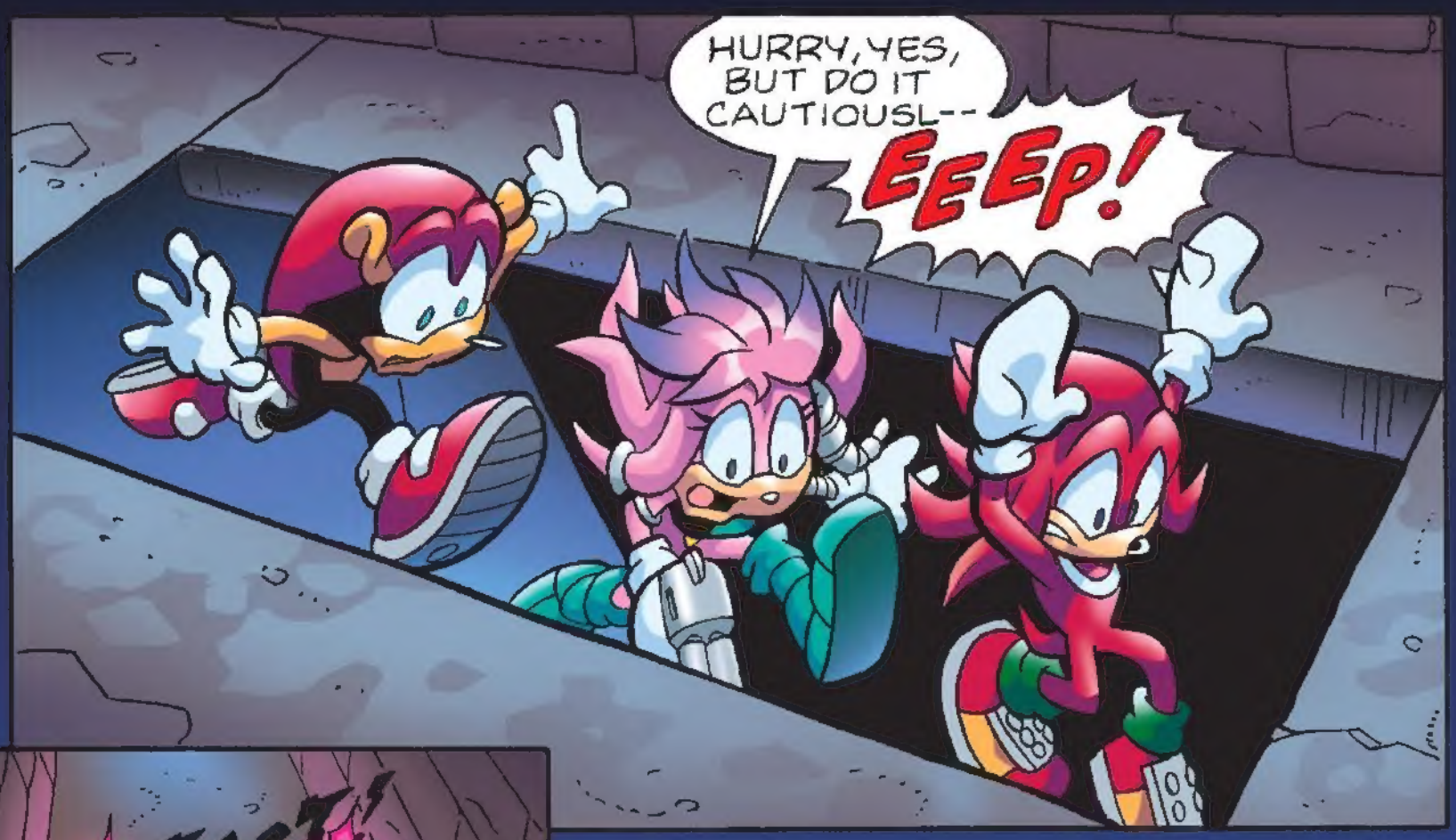
*AND YOU CAN, TOO, IN SONIC SELECT VOL.1!

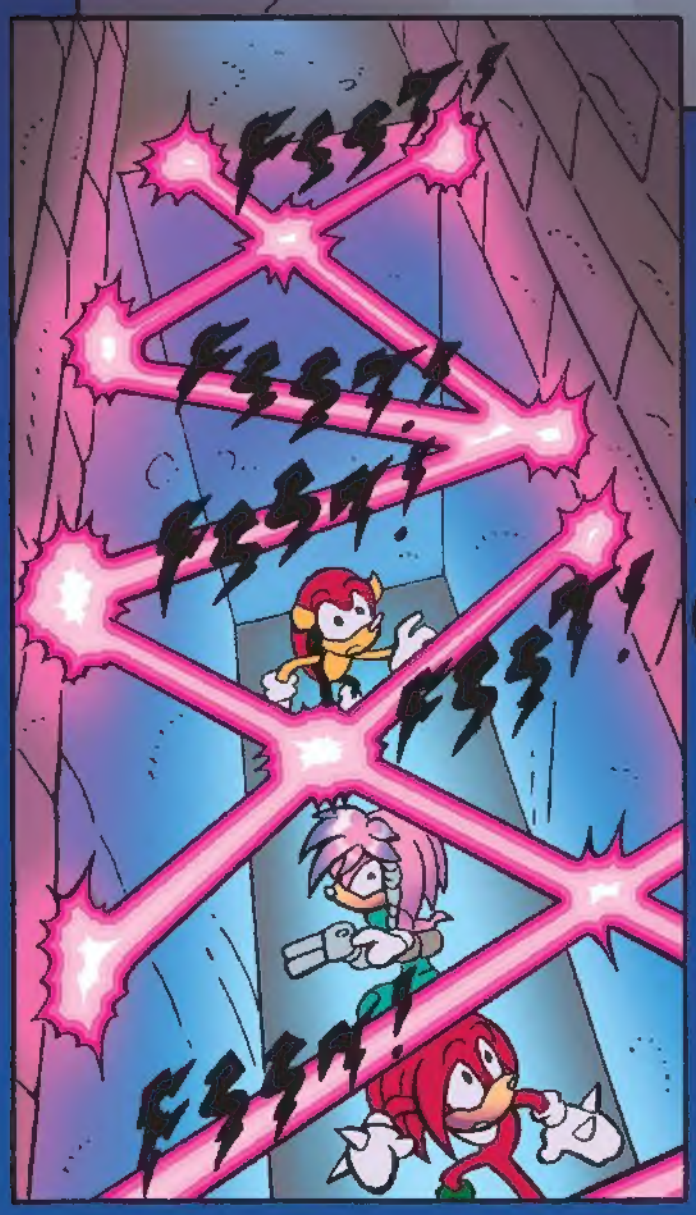
GUYS! FINITEVUS! FOCUS!
GEE, KNUX, I THOUGHT THAT AFTER YOU HOOKED UP WITH ALL YOUR ANCESTORS YOU GOT ALL YOUR ANSWERS ABOUT ECHIDNA HISTORY.
APPARENTLY SOMEONE'S STILL KEEPING SECRETS FROM ME.
WOW, I'M NOT DOING TOO WELL TODAY.
REMEMBER, HE'S A HOT-HEAD. LET'S KEEP MOVING.

MEANWHILE-- SHRINE ISLE
TH-TH-TH-THERE'S T-T-T-TOO M-M-M-MANY...!
KEEP IT TOGETHER, KID!
AAH!
WHAP
GRRK!


CHARMY... SAFFRON... NOW WOULD BE A GREAT TIME FOR YOU GUYS TO SHOW UP...
I W-W-W-WISH ESP-P-P-PIO W-W-W-WAS...
WE DON'T NEED THAT TRAITOR!
W-W-W-W-WE N-NEED S-S-S-S-SOMEBODY!
TH-TH-TH-TH--!
I SEE 'EM! THEY'RE GOING FOR THE MASTER EMERALD!

SANDOPOLIS-- MYSTERIOUS PYRAMID
NOT SO FAST!
DO YOU WANT ME TO HURRY UP OR SLOW DOWN?
MAKE UP YOUR MIND!


HURRY, YES, BUT DO IT CAUTIOUSL--
EEEP!


FSSST!
FSSST!
FSSST!
FSSST!
FSSST!

SHNK
YOW!

THE WALLS ARE CLOSING IN!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
NOT FOR LONG, I WANT ANSWERS!
You have to escape alive first, Knuckles!
And what about Vector and Ray against the robot horde?
The mysteries deepen and the stakes are raised next time in
SONIC UNIVERSE!